

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 261636
ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/WE:JDOBBINS:JL
APPROVED BY EUR - MR. VEST
S/S - MR. TARNOFF
NEA - MR. BISHOP
AF - MR. HARROP

-----067674 020107Z /64

O 020048Z NOV 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY RABAT IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW Y IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 261636

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:

TAGS:

SUBJECT: FRENCH REQUEST FOR US SUPPORT ON POLISARIO
PRISONER RELEASE.

1. ON NOVEMBER 1, FRENCH EMBASSY CONVEYED TO DEPARTMENT
REQUEST FROM FOREIGN MINISTER DE GUIRINGAUD TO SECRETARY
VANCE THAT THE USG APPROACH ALGERIAN GOVERNMENT IN SUPPORT
OF FRENC; EFFORTS TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF FRENCH NATIONALS
BEING HELD BY POLISARIO.

2. IN ADDITION TO POINTS CONTAINED IN AIDE MEMOIRE TRANS-
MITTED BELOW, FRENCH EMBOFF EXPRESSED CONVICTION THAT THERE
WAS NO QUESTION OF FRENCH MILITARY ACTION AGAINST ALGERIA.

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PAGE 02 STATE 261636

WHAT MIGHT BE CONSIDERED, HE SAID, WERE STEPS TO PROVIDE
BETTER SECURITY FOR FRENCH NATIONALS RESIDING IN THREATENED
AREAS, SUCH AS ZOUERATE.

3. FOLLOWING IS INFORMAL DEPARTMENT TRANSLATION OF AIDE
MEMOIRE LEFT BY THE FRENCH EMBOFF.

BEGIN TEXT: "ON THE FIRST OF MAY, SIX FRENCH NATIONALS WERE SEIZED AT ZOUERATE BY THE POLISARIO. THE 25TH OF OCTOBER, TWO OTHER FRENCH NATIONALS SUFFERED THE SAME FATE.

THE EIGHT FRENCH NATIONALS ARE TECHNICIANS RECRUITED AND EMPLOYED BY THE MAURITANIAN COMPANY EXPLOITING IRON ORE IN THE ZOUERATE REGION. THE CIVILIAN CHARACTER OF THEIR STATUS AND OF THEIR JOBS IS INCONTESTABLE. THEY ARE "INNOCENT CIVILIANS" ASSISTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF MAURITANIA. THEY WERE IN NO WAY INVOLVED WITH THE HOSTILITIES. FURTHERMORE, THESE FRENCH CITIZENS WERE SEIZED IN MAURITANIAN TERRITORY WHICH IS NOT IN DISPUTE. WHAT IS MORE, FRANCE HAS ALWAYS ADOPTED AN ATTITUDE OF NEUTRALITY IN THE CONFLICT REGARDING WESTERN SAHARA.

THE FRENCH AUTHORITIES FOLLOWING THE FIRST SEIZURE APPROACHED THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS REQUESTING THAT IT CONTACT THE DIFFERENT PARTIES INVOLVED TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ON THE FATE OF OUR COMPATRIOTS, TO REASSURE THEMSELVES ON THE CONDITIONS OF THEIR DETENTION, AND TO OBTAIN THEIR LIBERATION. THE ACTION OF THE ICRC WAS HINDERED BY A LACK OF COOPERATION ON THE PART OF THE ALGERIAN AUTHORITIES WHO, AFFIRMING THAT THEY WERE NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIONS OF THE POLISARIO, INDICATED THAT THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO RESPOND DIRECTLY TO THE DEMANDS PRESENTED BY THE RED CROSS. THEY OFFERED ONLY TO PUT THE
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PAGE 03 STATE 261636

RED CROSS IN CONTACT WITH THE SAHARAN RED CRESCENT.

ON ITS SIDE, THE POLISARIO PUBLICLY DECLARED SEVERAL TIMES THAT IT WOULD GIVE NO INFORMATION ON THE PRISONERS UNTIL THEY RECEIVED THE LISTS OF SAHARAN PRISONERS DETAINED BY MAURITANIA.

MAURITANIA HAS REFUSED SO FAR TO DO SO.

THE ATTITUDE OF POLISARIO, IN ANY CASE, IS NOT ACCEPTABLE IN OUR EYES, BECAUSE WE CAN ONLY REJECT AN EFFORT TO PUT OUR NATIONALS, WHO ARE HELD AS HOSTAGES IN THE SAME CATEGORY AS THE OTHER PRISONERS.

IN SUM, THE ACTION OF THE ICRC HAS COME TO AN IMPASSE.

ON OCTOBER 30, THE AMBASSADOR OF FRANCE AT ALGIERS GAVE A MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT BOUMEDIENNE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC. THE PURPOSE OF THIS MESSAGE WAS TO DRAW THE ATTENTION OF THE ALGERIAN PRESIDENT TO THE GRAVITY OF THIS SITUATION.

THE ALGERIAN CHIEF OF STATE DECLARED HIMSELF DISPOSED TO FACILITATE THE COMING TO ALGERIA OF A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ICRC WHO WOULD THEN HAVE THE NECESSARY CONTACTS. THE ALGERIAN RED CRESCENT WOULD THEN SERVE AS INTERMEDIARY.

THIS ATTITUDE OF THE ALGERIAN PRESIDENT SHOULD BE FAVORABLE TO THE RENEWAL OF THE ICRC ACTION WITH BETTER CHANCES OF SUCCESS EVEN THOUGH THE CONDITIONS IMPOSED BY THE POLISARIO TO THE LIBERATION OF OUR COMPATRIOTS MUST BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION." END TEXT;

4. FRENCH EMBOFF INDICATED THAT GOF HAS MADE SIMILAR REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE WITH ALGERIANS TO SEVERAL FRIENDLY ARAB GOVERNMENTS. VANCE
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PAGE 04 STATE 261636

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DRAFTED BY: AF/W:DVKILLION

APPROVED BY:AF:WCHARROP

EUR/WE:JDOBBINS

S/S-O:MCEURVORST

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P 030305Z NOV 77

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 261636

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 261636 ACTION ALGIERS PARIS RABAT
USUN DATED NOV 02:

QTE: S E C R E T STATE 261636

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION, PRISONERS RELEASE, NATIONALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 02-Nov-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 22 May 2009
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Executive Order: GS
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Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
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Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRENCH REQUEST FOR US SUPPORT ON POLISARIO PRISONER RELEASE.
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, PINS, US, AG, FR, POLISARIO
To: ALGIERS PARIS MULTIPLE
Type: TE
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Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
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22 May 2009
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